

## IN THE CLAIMS

Page 5, line 1, change "Patent Claims" to --What is claimed is:--.

Claims 1-8 (cancelled).

9. (New) A protective boot comprising:

bellows which terminate in a cylindrical bellows portion in which a bushing is fitted; said bushing having an outer diameter being at least equal to the inner diameter of the bellows portion;

said bushing comprising a material that is substantially transparent for a wavelength suitable for laser welding;

said bellows comprising a material that acts substantially absorbently; and

said bushing and said bellows being materially connected by a laser-welded connection.

10. (New) A protective boot comprising:

bellows which terminate in a cylindrical bellows portion in which a bushing is fitted; said bushing having an outer diameter being at least equal to the inner diameter of the bellows portion;

said bellows comprising a material that is substantially transparent for a wavelength suitable for laser welding;

~~said bushing comprising a material that acts substantially absorbently; and~~

~~said bushing and said bellows being materially connected by a laser-welded connection.~~

11. (New) The protective boot according to claim 9, wherein the bellows and the

bushing are made from the same thermoplastic in which carbon black particles are mixed in only for the bellows.

12. (New) The protective boot according to claim 10, wherein the bellows and the bushing are made from the same thermoplastic in which carbon black particles are mixed in only for the bushing.

13. (New) The protective boot according to claim 9, wherein the bushing has an area in which it has a constant wall thickness along its circumferential lines.

14. (New) The protective boot according to claim 13, wherein the inner diameter of the bushing is constant along the aforementioned area in which a collar is formed.

15. (New) The protective boot according to claim 13, wherein the inner diameter of the bushing is adapted continuously to the outer diameter along the aforementioned area in which a bevel is formed.

16. (New) The protective boot according to claim 9, wherein the bellows is made of Hytrel 8223 and the bushing is made of Hytrel 5526.